1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

picked out from the shell, after being cooked, with a splinter of wood. The liquid in which they have been boiled (*siro*) is drunk from the pot, spooned up with a half-coco-nut shell or a mussel shell, and is much appreciated. At the end of one such meal I asked my hostess to pick out specimens of all the different kinds of shell-fish which had been in the pot; she gave me nineteen different shells, with the native name of each.

Trepang (*bêche-de-mer*) are very plentiful, but are not used as food. Melanesians are amused at the idea of their being eaten, and laugh at the Chinese for doing so. (There are several Chinese stores in this area, so they are acquainted with this habit.)

Crabs are a frequent addition to a meal; I collected the names of twenty varieties which are eaten. A large land-crab called *amo'on* is especially liked. But the robber-crab (*Birgus latro*), which Guppy (1887, p. 322) reports as being considered a luxury by the Shortland Islanders, is not eaten by the people of the north coast of Bougainville. The question did not arise while I was at Petats, but when we were discussing it at Kurtatchi, on the occasion of the game described on p. 13, my servant said that the Petats people used never to eat them in the past, but the Fijian teacher had said they were good, and now they were much liked 'because they have so much grease'. The hermit-crab (*kubar*) which is very plentiful, and takes possession of almost any shell lying about empty, is never eaten as it is considered dirty.

Turtles are sometimes to be had. They are most easily caught by visiting an island on which they have landed to lay their eggs, when they may be turned on their backs and collected at leisure. I have also several descriptions of a method of catching turtles in a net from a canoe; this involves a man diving so as to lift the creature into the canoe. They say that men sometimes meet their death in this work, by getting caught in the net and finding themselves unable to come to the surface. Turtle meat is cooked by being wrapped in packets of leaves and placed in the embers; the eggs are treated in a similar manner, and are considered a great delicacy. The turtles of this district are mostly of the variety known as 'green-backs', the shells of which are of little or no value commercially.

Crocodiles are not eaten, as a rule, but I was informed that if a crocodile kills or maims a native, and is afterwards caught, his flesh is cooked and eaten, apparently as an insult, in the same

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

Dugong (*liam*, P.) sometimes come close in shore at night, at high water. They are said to be caught with a kind of square drag net, fixed on to a pole at each end. I have not seen this procedure, or a sample of this kind of net.

There are numerous 'medicines' for ensuring a good result in fishing with the *ēb*. The following are the most interesting of those in my collection:

Go to the bush and get some of the plants called *sō* and *gunaugu*. Scrape off some of their bark, and mix it with *oin*. (Iron oxide, see p. 416.) Wrap the mixture in a leaf of the fan-palm *win*. Put the bundle in the bottom of the canoe. Then get some of the bark of the trees *winoa* (canarium almond) and *haru* (Barringtonia). Scrape it. Take some *sisina* (see p. 475) and powder it into your hand, then sprinkle the scraped bark of the *winoa* and *haru* with it. You must do this while you are quite alone, no one must see you do it.

When you want to go and catch fish, put a dab of this mixture of scraped bark and *sisina* on your ears and nose. Take the bundle of *sō* and *gunaugu* and open it out. Lay it on the outrigger of your canoe, but if a wind springs up you must take it in quickly so that it shall not be blown away.

Then take your net and pick up a stone—any stone from the beach will do—and throw it into the net; throw it hard. This is to test the strength of the net. As you throw, say: '*Watoan tuk a ien arawa to no soa sots.*' ('Look out for the fish here which is coming now.') That is, you make the net think a fish is coming into it. If the net breaks, you must make a new one; if it holds, you can go on. Then put the stone into your canoe and go out to sea.

Now your net cannot be lazy in catching fish. The other canoes may come back empty, but yours will be full of fish. It will beat the other canoes every time.

When you come ashore, put the bundle of leaves away with your two nets; hang them up in the rafters of your hut, and make a little barricade round the place where they are; no one must go inside it. When the bundle of leaves rots, make a new one in the same way.

Most of the 'prescriptions' are used without any formula, such as the following:

Awaugau.

This is a mixture of root and bark scrapings and dried leaves with *oin*, kept in a package tied up with leaves. It was highly valued by its owner, who said he got it from his grandfather at Timputa, and did not know exactly what was in it. He gave me a little of the mixture as a great favour. It is for dabbing at the outer corners of the eyelids; if this

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

by the fisherman, who dives down and pushes it into holes in the rocks. He then goes back to his canoe. In a short time there is an 'explosion' which stuns the fish; the small ones come to the surface, the large ones are dived for. I am not clear as to the exact nature of this 'explosion'. My informants said it was 'just like dynamite', with which some of them are familiar as it is used for killing fish by the planters, though there are government restrictions on its use by natives owing to the liability to accidents. I have not seen this plant used, but it seems clear from the description given that the fish are actually stunned or killed by the explosion, and not poisoned. Williams (1930, p. 58) reports among the Orokaiva the use of the vine *Anisi*, a species of derris, which goes by the name of 'New Guinea dynamite'. Unfortunately, the specimen of *tsu* which I brought home was not adequate for identification, so I cannot say whether it is the same plant. Williams describes its action as poisoning. 'The root of the Anisi is pounded on a log. It exudes a highly poisonous milky fluid which permeates the water, and brings the fish stupefied to the surface.'

The actual poisoning of fish is also known to these people. They use the fruit of *wapatun* (a large tree which grows on the shore) by pulping it on a stone and throwing it into the water. This does not explode, but poisons the fish, which then rise to the surface and are picked up.

The poisoning of fish is a very widespread practise among primitive peoples. Ivens describes a method of poisoning employed in the SE. Solomons involving a preparation of the bark of the Barringtonia tree 'heated in the fire to bring out its bitter qualities' (1927, p. 389). The kernel of the fruit of a species of Barringtonia is used for poisoning pools by the Samoans (Hiroa, 1930, p. 443), and the outer portion of the fruit of the same tree by the Fijians 'for stupefying fish for the purpose of catching them' (Maiden, 1889, p. 160, quoted from Seemann, *Flora Vitensis*). The plant called *wapatun*, mentioned above, is not the ordinary Barringtonia, the kernels of which are eaten. This is called *karu* and is used for various medicinal purposes, but not, so far as I know, for catching fish. It may, however, be another species of Barringtonia.

11. *Drives.*

Under appropriate conditions, in places where there is a muddy shore, such as that in a bay near Novar, on the western end of Buka

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

225 Passage, porpoises (*bŭr*) are caught by means of a drive using several canoes. These range themselves in a line, and all the men splash and shout, so that the porpoises are driven up into the shallows, where they stick fast in the mud by their heads and fins. The men then come and take them out. It is said to be not uncommon for canoes to be smashed and people hurt in the excitement of such a drive. This method was not practicable in the neighbourhood of Kurtatchi, and I have not seen it.

METHODS USED BY WOMEN ONLY

12. *Barricade of leaves.*

226 A long thick chain (*pilu*, P.) is made by binding together a quantity of leaves, ferns, and small branches of foliage, secured by ropes of creeper, much as we bind up evergreens to make festoons for Christmas decoration. At low tide, when there is a little water just covering the reef, a crowd of women and girls will take two of these chains down to the shore, and two or more of the assembled company will seize one end of each. While the other ends of both are held by others remaining at the edge of the water, these will start a few yards distant from each other, will run out into the water, trailing the chain behind them and curving towards one another, with much shouting and splashing, till the two parties meet a short distance from the shore, having laid the chains out in the form of a semicircle with the shore for its diameter. The rest of the party [225] line up along the outer side of this barrier, and put little stiff open-meshed baskets (*aunat*, P.) under the edges of the leaves and branches of the chain, holding them with the left hand, thumbs inside, with the mouths of the baskets turned inwards, and their lower edges touching the reef. When they see any fish, they flip the water with the finger and thumb of the right hand, in order to drive them towards the basket. The right hand is then placed over the mouth of the basket, which is picked up quickly, and any fish it may contain are tipped into another basket hanging behind from a cord round the woman's waist. Then the chains of leaves and branches are picked up and run out again at another spot, and so on. *Silohon* and a host of other tiny fish are caught in this way, at which the women and girls are very adept. It is not as easy as it looks. This method was frequently practised at Petats (Pl. 47), but I did not see it anywhere on the Bougainville coast, which has

On north Bougainville I repeatedly observed a multi-pronged arrow; 226
the points attached to the arrowshaft, which were arranged after the 227
fashion of the well-known fishing spears, consisted of 4 to 6 very
sharp and pointed bamboo splinters. The owners of these arrows
were inhabitants of the interior; I assume that the arrow is used
principally in the rivers and water courses in the interior since I never
observed it among the coastal inhabitants.

North Bougainville and Buka have one fishing method that is not [171]
found in the south: namely, fishing by means of artificial weir
baskets. These weir baskets (in Buka: fwou) are made from the leaf
ribs of the coconut palm; they are 1 to 1 1/2 meters high and conical
in shape; the lower circular opening measures up to [35] one meter
in diameter. The leaf ribs lie close together and are firmly attached
at intervals of 5 to 10 centimeters; only the upper ends have no con-
nection for a length of 15 to 25 centimeters. When using it, one in-
serts into the upper end a little ring of tough wood (in Buka: fapirik).
This ring is fastened to a straight stick about 25 to 30 centimeters long by
means of four thinner rods which run from its edge to the middle. The
ring is used to make the weir basket taut; the projecting ends at the
top of the basket are attached to the central rod by means of a string,
and this keeps the entire implement taut. This weir basket is often
used in shallow water; the fisherman holds the upper and pointed end
in his hand and drops the open lower end over the fish to be caught.

In the narrow drains of the mangrove swamps the fish are caught
by means of fish dams; these are made in the following way: between
and on sticks which, at a distance of about 1 meter from each other,
are stuck in the ground diagonally across the course of the water, a
wicker work of coconut leaves is fastened, so that when the water
level falls the fish are blocked off from the sea.

It goes without saying that all the fish caught in the sea are also 262
used as food. Sea cucumbers, cuttlefish, snails and mollusks of
every description find their way into the cooking pot. The native [825]
can exactly distinguish the poisonous fish--and their number is not
slight--from the unharmful ones. Sharks and dolphins are considered
delicacies, but there is no special catching apparatus for them; spear
and arrow are the main weapons used. As a rule they sneak up on 225
tortoises on the small islands and sandbanks when the animals visit
them to lay their eggs; many a tortoise who is resting on the surface
of the sea is also killed by spear.